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The Bear and the Machine

An Intimate Message from Washington

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By Neal Stanford

This time it is the bear that has a bear by the tail. What bear? What tail?

The bear is the U.S.S.R.; and the tail is "industrialization." If that is an over-simplification it is because most any analysis of the situation in the U.S.S.R. would be an over-simplification—so why not have a simple over-simplification?

It also happens to be a favorite thesis of that other Dulles, Allen Welsh Dulles, head of CIA or "Central Intelligence." Between the two Dulles brothers (John Foster, Secretary of State, and Allen— and perhaps one should include their sister for good measure, Eleanor Lansing Dulles) there is precious little going on around the world that the Dulleses don't know about, at least know more than most people.

It is not entirely a novel thesis that the U.S.S.R. is now suffering from industrial indigestion. But to suggest that what is happening in Poland and Hungary, the Soviet satellites, is also in part symptoms of this same malaise is a new twist.

Actually there is a major difference between the industrial problem affecting the Soviet Union and that involving Hungary and Poland. One is self-induced; the other imposed.

In the Soviet Union today we see forced industrialization carried out with a vengeance—and considerable success. It has provided the U.S.S.R. with a military machine that ranks second only to that of the United States. It undoubtedly saved the U.S.S.R. during the last war. But the Soviet leaders, as the situation is seen from here, have paid a price for this industrialization—a price they may regret. That price is a progressively educated citizenry.

Along with their forced industrialization the Soviets have achieved a certain massive sophistication. To get the first they had to permit the second. And therein stems their trouble. The intellectual forces they have let loose in their industrialization program are coming home to plague them.

It is the Soviet Union's industrial intelligentsia who are beginning to question

the infallibility of the political primitives ruling them. It is the educated technicians that they must have for industrialization who are questioning the morality of a system that produced the abuses of Stalinism. In sum, the leaven of education is at work in the U.S.S.R. to the glory of Russia, but to the despair of the Politburo.

In the satellites forced industrialization is also bearing fruit. The people in the satellites had been led to believe they would benefit from industrialization. They have not. Rather they have seen the production of their factories siphoned off for others with no adequate compensation or return.

The satellites have learned from experience that industrialization does not necessarily mean economic well-being. The Soviet first industrialized them; then it impoverished them. That was more than they could take, or intended to take. And it is more than Moscow should have tried to achieve—the Kremlin now publicly admits. As a recent editorial in Pravda confessed: "We were not justified economically in trying to industrialize Hungary."

Of course it was not just the mistaken headlong industrialization in Poland and Hungary that brought political explosions in those countries. That would be to belittle the breathtaking courage of the Hungarians, the fierce determination of the Poles, in behalf of freedom. But it is part of the picture at least in both countries, part of the explanation of these revolts that have occurred.

In Russia industrialization has set free forces that threaten the existing dictatorship. In the satellites industrialization has impoverished rather than benefited the peoples. The result is that throughout the whole Soviet empire, both within and without the boundaries of the Soviet Union, industrialization is undermining the very edifice it helped create.

It is educating the Soviets; it is pauperizing the satellite peoples.

The bear indeed has a bear by the tail. And as in other such cases it does not know how to let go.